

H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023.

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Good afternoon, Senator Abrams, Representative Dillon, Senator Somers, Representative Kennedy and members of the Appropriations Health Sub-Committee. My name is Mallory Breitmaier and I am a nurse practitioner and School Based Health Center manager working in the Goodwin University Magnet School System's School Based Health Centers with Integrated Health Services in East Hartford. Integrated Health Services offers medical, dental and behavioral health services to the Goodwin University Magnet School System district, which services over 1,000 students who reside multiple districts across the state. I've come before you today to testify on behalf of the Governor's Department of Public Health budget specific to the School Based Health Center line item.

Every child deserves a chance to be healthy and to reach their full potential in life. But many children have health problems that make it difficult for them to learn and succeed. We all want young people in Connecticut to be healthy and thriving. School based health centers help young people with their mental, physical, and their oral health problems. To illustrate this with a real patient, I want to share the school based health center experience of my patient, alias Renee.

Renee received the full gamut of services offered by our school based health center during her time at Connecticut River Academy- medical, dental and behavioral health. I know it seems simple, but the services Renee needed the most was preventative care counseling. This is something she would not have received on a regular basis through her primary care provider at the city's Federally Qualified Health Center, even though she was at high-risk due to her risky behaviors and history of trauma.

I could tell you about other students who had their lives literally saved through the SBHC but I'm sure you will hear those stories from others. This is a modest one about the needs of our young people and the gap that currently exists in our current health care system in preventative care counseling and health education.

SBHCs offer students precisely what they need: a safe and private environment to advocate for their needs and ask questions, in the setting where they spend a majority of their day. No other health care model can provide this service and fulfill this need for our youth when and where they need it most. Through our preventative counseling and trauma-based therapy Renee excelled.

I haven't seen Renee in four years but out of the blue, she contacted me a couple weeks ago to say thank you for the influence I provided as her SBHC APRN. She also let me know about all the changes she has been able to make in her life. She is graduating from an LPN program soon and is excited about her future. There is no greater feeling than a former

patient thanking you years later and knowing that you made a difference in their life through your life's work.

I respectfully ask that you increase the funding for School Based Health Centers throughout the state so young people like Renee can continue to thrive and remain in school. This is critical to their future. Thank you for supporting School Based Health Centers.